



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill
Middle District of Florida

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| Tampa | Orlando | Jacksonville | Ocala | Fort Myers |
| FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | | | CONTACT: WILLIAM DANIELS | |
| Thursday, April 7, 2011 | | | PHONE: (813) 274-6388 | |
| http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr | | | FAX: (813) 274-6300 | |

KINGPIN OF AUTO THEFT AND CLONING RING SENTENCED

Tampa, Florida - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that U.S. District Judge Susan C. Bucklew today sentenced Pablo Barrio (56, Tampa) to thirteen years in federal prison for leading a multi-object conspiracy involving the cloning of and interstate transportation of stolen automobiles; participating in the interstate transportation of stolen automobiles; mail fraud and aggravated identity theft. The court entered a forfeiture money judgment in the amount of \$2.5 million, the proceeds of the charged criminal conduct and ordered restitution in excess of \$204,000. Pablo Barrio pled guilty on January 7, 2011.

According to court documents, from an unknown date prior to April 2000, through on or about March 19, 2009, a conspiracy existed involving Pablo Barrio and numerous associates (co-conspirators). The conspiracy included multiple objects such as stealing motor vehicles, including luxury automobiles, sports utility vehicles, and various models of pickup trucks, from individuals and businesses including automobile dealerships throughout the Middle District of Florida and elsewhere. It also involved obtaining privately owned motor vehicles from individuals who voluntarily reported their vehicles stolen in order to make fraudulent insurance claims on the vehicles; altering and changing the VIN

plates and decals (cloning) of the vehicles with counterfeit VIN plates and decals, which were sent via commercial interstate and foreign carriers, such as FedEx, DHL, and UPS, to the conspirators located in Mexico; and transporting these stolen and cloned vehicles to locations outside the state of Florida for sale, using counterfeit vehicle titles and other documents received from the co-conspirators in Mexico.

During the existence of the conspiracy, the conspirators stole and transported more than one hundred motor vehicles in interstate commerce. The value of these vehicles totaled more than \$2.5 million. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, this group of individuals led by Pablo Barrio was one of the most prolific and sophisticated professional auto theft organizations ever encountered.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation along with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Miami-Dade Auto Theft Task Force, Tampa Police Department, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Kane-Cook County Auto Theft Task Force in Illinois, Dupage County Auto Theft Task Force in Illinois, Texas Department of Public Safety, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Donald L. Hansen.